

Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, DC 20554

In the Matter of)
Implementation of Section 621(a)(1) of)
the Cable Communications Policy Act of 1984)
as amended by the Cable Television Consumer)
Protection and Competition Act of 1992)

MB Docket No. 05-311

COMMENTS OF SIGNAL HILL

These Comments are filed by Signal Hill in support of the comments filed by the National League of Cities and the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors ("NATOA"). Like NLC and NATOA, Signal Hill believes that local governments can issue an appropriate local franchise for new entrants into the video services field on a timely basis, just as they have for established cable services providers. In support of this belief, we wish to inform the Commission about the facts of video franchising in our community.

Cable Franchising in Our Community

Community Information

Signal Hill is a City with a population of 10,951. Our franchised cable provider is Charter Communications. Our community has negotiated cable franchises since 1985.

Competitive Cable Systems

A competitive provider has not approached our community in the last twenty-one years of granting franchises. Signal Hill has adopted procedures for competitive providers, which are reasonable and simple to comply with. Signal Hill Municipal Code Section 13.12, Community Antenna Television Systems, regulates the granting of cable franchises, including those that rely on fiber optics. This ordinance was adopted in 1985. The ordinance contains the filing procedures and outlines the franchise fees. The ordinance also regulates the installation of the system, including specifications in public rights-of-way and customer service standards. The ordinance regulates the removal and abandonment of the system. Like many communities, Signal Hill requires a public access channel. This channel has proved invaluable in providing public information, including public safety information, to our community. The ordinance, the franchise renewal and franchise transfer processes have been orderly and timely for both Charter Cable and the City. They will be the same for competitive providers.

Conclusions

The local cable franchising process functions well in Signal Hill. As the above information indicates, we are experienced at working with cable providers insuring that the needs of the local community are met and to ensure that the practical business needs of cable providers are taken into account.

Local cable franchising ensures that local cable operators are allowed access to the rights of way in a fair and evenhanded manner, that other users of the rights of way are not unduly inconvenienced, and that uses of the rights of way, including maintenance and upgrade of facilities, are undertaken in a manner which is in accordance with local requirements. Local cable franchising also ensures that our local community's specific needs are met and that local customers are protected.

Local franchises thus provide a means for local government to appropriately oversee the operations of cable service providers in the public interest, and to ensure compliance with applicable laws. There is no need to create a new Federal bureaucracy in Washington to handle matters of specifically local interest.

Finally, local franchises allow each community, including ours, to have a voice in how local cable systems will be implemented and what features (such as PEG access, institutional networks or local emergency alerts, etc.) will be available to meet local needs. These factors are equally present for new entrants as for existing users.

The City of Signal Hill therefore respectfully requests that the Commission do nothing to interfere with local government authority over franchising or to otherwise impair the operation of the local franchising process as set forth under existing Federal law with regard to either existing cable service providers or new entrants.

Respectfully submitted,

Signal Hill

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